

THE LOSS OF AN AUSTRALIAN ICON AND BREAKING NEW GROUND

Like the rest of the automotive community, I was deeply saddened to hear the news of General Motors' decision to 'retire' the Holden brand in Australia

Holden is about as 'Aussie' as it gets and holds a special place in the hearts of many who own or have owned a Holden.

It is a great loss to the country and the Australian automotive industry. Implications for more than 600 employees of this iconic brand, plus the large network of dealerships and aftermarket suppliers involved with product and service support, can't be underestimated.

I have directly and indirectly been involved with Holden on several ground-breaking initiatives over the years. In my previous role as Executive Director of the Society of Automotive Engineers, Holden was instrumental in the establishment of the Formula SAE competition in Australia, becoming a consortium member of the project. Over the years Formula SAE has provided hands on opportunities for thousands of student engineers, to develop real world skills in a fun, competition-based environment and reinvigorated automotive engineering at a student level.

In addition to this, Holden itself has been responsible for employing and developing a great number of world class engineers, many of whom are now in senior leadership roles across the industry globally. During my time at the Australian Trade Commission in the early 2000s, I also worked with Holden management and their supply chain partners to facilitate the export of the then new Holden Caprice into China.

Another significant decision by Holden that has not received enough credit in my opinion, was their commitment in 2014 to become the only car manufacturer to allow the sharing of full dealer level service and repair information with independent workshops across the country. With the recent announcement of Holden's demise, this commitment will leave Holden owners with peace-of-mind that their vehicles can be serviced and repaired to the manufacturer's specifications by their workshop of choice for the life of their vehicle.

As the year quickly unfolds, we are now only a few short months away from Autocare 2020 which will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre across the 19th and 20th of June. Autocare is an education-led convention, designed to ensure all businesses have access to the latest information and training to enable

them to adapt to the unprecedented change and disruption taking place in our industry.

The economic value of electronic content on a modern vehicle now exceeds 40 percent. Each model year brings more and more systems and components that are monitored or controlled by sensors or actuators. Vehicles with active and passive safety systems, pass through technology, embedded telematics ('connected car'), hybrid, electric and semi-autonomous are on Australian roads today and these vehicles will need to be safely repaired and maintained for their useful life anywhere in Australia.

Add to this the complexity of the Australian car parc with 68 brands and over 300 models of vehicles sold, skills shortages, together with the need for automotive technicians to continually upgrade their skills and knowledge and you have a combination of factors that will have a profound impact on every single business at every level of the value chain.

Addressing the theme Invest in Your Future Success, Autocare 2020 will feature industry experts from across Australia and the globe. The convention will provide the very latest information and practical tips on how you can tackle these challenges to not only survive, but thrive by taking advantage of the many opportunities that will arise as our industry changes and adapts to this new reality.

For further information or to register for this Convention, visit www.autocare.org.au

Our recent Victorian Member Networking evening was another landmark event for the AAAA. A record 160 attendees got to experience our new Auto Innovation Centre (AIC) first-hand and heard presentations on the important topics of vehicle standards, modifications and new vehicle technologies. With an undeniable buzz in the room, it was an informative and inspiring evening for all.

Another ground-breaking moment for the industry occurred with the announcement at this event that the AIC was able to offer our industry access to a pre-release Chevrolet Silverado 1500. This is significant as it is the first time a vehicle importer has allowed aftermarket manufacturers the opportunity to get a head start on the product development process for parts and accessory



programs on a new vehicle platform. Sessions will be available for measuring, 3D scanning and non-destructive product test fitment and we hope that this will be the first of many such opportunities across a range of vehicle makes and models into the future.

A strong area of future growth for our automotive manufacturing sector is exports and the ever-growing global car-parc. With a favourable Australian dollar and Australian designed automotive products globally recognised for their quality and advanced technology, international interest is at an all-time high. To capitalise on this, our specialist Automotive Product Manufacturer and Exporters Council (APMEC) continues to support and promote the interests of Australia's diverse and internationally competitive automotive components manufacturing sector.

The recent APMEC Seminar in Melbourne on March 16th addressed important questions around exporting, entering new markets, overcoming trade issues and cyber-attack prevention. It featured government and industry speakers.

These AAAA led activities and industry-firsts are all examples of how we are continually breaking new ground to ensure the best outcomes for our members and to advance the interests of the aftermarket industry.

To read more about the impact of Holden's exit from the Australian market see page 12.

For further information on any of these activities, contact the AAAA National Office on 03 9545 3333 or info@aaaa.com.au

STUART CHARITY
Chief Executive Officer